United Nations S/PV.7807

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7807th meeting

Thursday, 10 November 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Seck	(Senegal)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Walbridge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Coleman
	Uruguay	Mrs. Carrión
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/919)

Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/920)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

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The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/946, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to documents S/2016/919 and S/2016/920, which contains letters dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Angola, China, Egypt, Russian Federation and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 10 votes in favour, none against and 5 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2317 (2016).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2317 (2016). This sanctions regime continues to play a vital role in promoting peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. In Somalia, it is preventing the flow of illicit arms and cutting off Al-Shabaab's funding. It is preserving natural resources to the benefit of all Somalis and for their economic empowerment, and it is helping to provide better weapons and ammunition management for the Somali security forces.

But renewing the resolution today is just one part of our support to Somalia. A timely and credible electoral process this month is critical to Somalia's future, and we look forward to continuing support of the incoming Federal Government of Somalia over the coming months. One of the key priorities for the new Government will be a political agreement on security sector reform that is affordable, accountable, sustainable and acceptable to federal and regional authorities in Somalia.

Turning to Eritrea, the resolution could have looked very different if the Government of Eritrea had wanted it to, but the continuing lack of cooperation from Eritrea with the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea and the Council left us with no choice. We could not welcome a visit as there has been no invitation. We could not welcome progress because nothing has changed. So we urge Eritrea to take steps to engage constructively and in a sustained manner with the Monitoring Group, as mandated by the Council. We cannot be in the same position next year.

Some Council members have questioned the lack of movement by the Council on sanctions on Eritrea. In the resolution, we have recognized the positive developments. We have welcomed the release in March of four Djiboutian prisoners of war who had been held since 2008. We have recognized the lack of evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab, and we have expressed an intention to review the measures on Eritrea in six

months' time. But without the cooperation of Eritrea, in compliance with the resolutions of the Council, our hands are tied. Council members that regret the lack of movement on this sanctions regime should look to only one place — Eritrea.

The resolution has regional implications, and as penholder we took extensive steps to engage with all of the relevant regional stakeholders so that we could balance the views of the Council and of the region. It is therefore particularly disappointing that some Council members felt that they could not support it, despite those extensive efforts.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has been closely following the situation in the Horn of Africa and welcomes the progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia in promoting the political process and reconstruction. We commend the African Union and the countries of the region for their contribution to the fight against the terrorist group Al-Shabaab.

We call on the international community to continue to help Somalia in its State-building efforts. We support the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Somali National Army in their efforts to speedily achieve peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. The Horn of Africa is geographically important, and peace and stability there have a direct bearing on the interests of the countries of the region, which should live side by side as neighbours and belong to an interdependent community with a shared future and intertwined interests. They all face the important task of achieving economic development and improving the benefits to their people, which will require a peaceful and stable environment. Harmony benefits the countries of the region, whereas confrontation harms them.

China sincerely hopes that the countries of the region will take into account the bigger picture of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and the fundamental interests of its peoples, strengthen good-neighbourly relationships, promote unity and cooperation, and reconcile their differences through dialogue and consultation, which are in the common interests of all the countries of the region.

The sanctions set out in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council are not conducive to achieving the aforementioned objectives. China hopes that the Security Council will take the changes on the ground into account, continuously revisit the relevant content of its resolutions, and make timely adjustments. China also hopes that the relevant country will adhere to the principle of maintaining friendly relations with its neighbours, heed their legitimate concerns and adopt practical measures to improve relations with its neighbours so as to achieve common security, mutual benefits and win-win outcomes.

China is ready to continue to play its constructive role in achieving peace, stability and development in the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): Today, the Security Council has adopted resolution 2317 (2016), renewing the mandate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. Angola supports the Monitoring Group and welcomes its tireless efforts to engage with all the parties and contribute to the improvement of the security situation in the region and to the compliance of United Nations Member States with the sanctions regime imposed on Somalia and Eritrea.

And yet, Angola abstained in the voting today. We would like to outline the reasons for our vote.

Regarding Somalia, the activities of the Monitoring Group have contributed significantly to improving the security situation in the country, as mandated by the Council. Regarding Eritrea, it should be noted that, for the third consecutive year, the Monitoring Group has found no evidence of Eritrean support to the Somali terrorist group Al-Shabaab. The sanctions regime has proven to be fruitful, but it must be terminated when the reasons for its establishment no longer exist. That should be done through a process in which the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea continues to inform the Security Council on the situation and support the international community's efforts to bring stability to the Horn of Africa.

A constructive proposal has been put forward for the establishment of a road map conducive to changing the sanctions regime, based on conditions to be agreed by the Security Council. That proposal would be an additional encouragement to the Government of Eritrea to engage further with the international community. The proposal has not been given due consideration, which we deeply regret. We take note of the efforts of the penholder to bring more balance to the text. We hope that in future, more constructive engagement among members of the Security Council will achieve the necessary unity among all its members.

Ms. Coleman (United States of America): The United States strongly supports resolution 2317 (2016), which targets many of the most serious causes of instability in the Horn of Africa and mandates the United Nations Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group to continue its crucial work. Renewing that mandate reflects the Security Council's understanding that sanctions regimes are an important part of the international community's comprehensive response to the situation in the Horn of Africa.

First, on Eritrea, I would like to point out that, while Eritrea calls for the lifting of United Nations sanctions, as have several members of the Council, the lack of engagement by Eritrea with the United Nations Monitoring Group — under a Security Council Chapter VII mandate — is not the path to lifting sanctions. Eritrea has not been forthcoming with information with regard to its support to regional armed groups. And, while the Monitoring Group has not found evidence of Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab, it is difficult to corroborate that information, because the Monitoring Group has not been allowed to visit the country in five years. While Eritrea has released some Djiboutian prisoners of war, it has not been forthcoming with information on any remaining such prisoners. That lack of cooperation must change if the Council is to take seriously Eritrea's calls to lift sanctions.

Turning to Somalia, during the 21 September high-level meeting on Somalia, Council members widely affirmed that Somalia had transitioned from State failure to State-building. Today Somalia stands at a critical junction to solidify its political and security gains. That is why the United States strongly supported language in the resolution that reflects the Security Council's commitment to eliminate all sources of funding for Al-Shabaab, a group that continues to attack innocent civilians and to threaten the peace and stability of both Somalia and the region. The resolution also supports the Government's efforts at security-sector reform, including developing a professional army.

We also support the resolution because it acknowledges several of the Government's goals, including its intention to seek greater international recognition and support for its efforts to address extensive illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in waters where it has jurisdiction. It also makes clear that the mismanagement of public funds in Somalia will undercut the credibility of governance, the gains made in the country and its prospects for future growth in Somalia. By supporting the full implementation reflected in today's resolution, Member States would help to promote the long-term peace and stability of the broader region.

In conclusion, Somalis are laying the foundation for a more stable, representative and inclusive Government. The United States stands by Somalia and the international community. The Council must remain engaged to ensure that Somalia and the region achieve a more peaceful future. We thank Council members for joining with us in sending that strong message today.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Like other members of the Security Council, we would love to see the swift establishment of solid peace and stability in Somalia and Eritrea and throughout the entire Horn of Africa. However, we were forced to abstain in the voting on resolution 2317 (2016) for the following reasons.

Support by Eritrea to the Al-Shabaab terrorist group and the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea were the main criteria for imposing restrictive measures on Asmara in 2009. Since then, however, the situation on the ground has changed significantly. In its reports three years in a row, the Monitoring Group concluded that there was no evidence of Eritrea providing assistance to Al-Shabaab and that the border dispute with Djibouti has been settled through Qatar's mediation. Allegations that Eritrea is allegedly supporting regional armed groups are uncorroborated. It therefore looks as if the reasons that led to the need to impose sanctions simply no longer exist. The sanctions regime against Eritrea has not taken that into account, and they have remained unchanged. In that regard, perhaps the time has come to draw up a road map for the gradual lifting of sanctions against Eritrea, as suggested by a number of delegations in the course of work on the resolution.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like briefly to explain the reasons that prompted my delegation to abstain in the voting on resolution 2317 (2016), concerning extending the sanctions regime on Somalia and Eritrea and on prolonging the mandate of the Monitoring Group.

We would have liked the wording used in the resolution to be more balanced in the light of the information contained in the Monitoring Group's report, namely, the lack of any evidence of Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab, as well as the positive developments

with regard to Djibouti prisoners. We think that clearer criteria should be used when the Security Council takes the necessary steps to review the sanctions imposed against Eritrea — criteria that could encourage the country to cooperate with the Council by showing a clear commitment to uphold its various obligations under Council resolutions. That should be done with a view to promoting peace and security and stability in the Horn of Africa, as well as to resolve all the concerns of the countries of the region, in particular with regard to the humanitarian aspect. In that regard, priority should be accorded to providing information on the fate of the Djibouti soldiers who disappeared during military operations.

Allow me to state that our abstaining in the voting is fully in line with our constant position on the issue of sanctions. Sanctions must be used not as an end in and of themselves, but as a necessary temporary measure with clear limits used to achieve a political goal. It is unacceptable for sanctions to continue endlessly and without any time-bound criteria. It is also important that we deal with sanctions in a sufficiently flexible manner so that they can be reviewed in line with new information on the ground.

Despite the efforts made and the flexibility we demonstrated to achieve the compromise we wanted, the resolution presented to the Council today did not include the proposals of some Council members, including my delegation. They included ideas reflecting the trends to which I have just referred. That is why we were unable to vote in favour of the resolution.

With regard to Somalia, my delegation underscores yet again the importance of accepting the provisions set out in the resolution with a view to ending the provision of weapons to terrorist groups and cut off their sources of funding, so as to allow for effective counter-terrorism efforts and restore peace and security in the country.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela abstained in the voting on resolution 2317 (2016), for we believe that the part referring to Eritrea, as presented to us, is unfair. As Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, we have been working closely on that issue for almost two years. This is the last time that we will be participating in a vote on this text. We are obliged to say that what is taking place in the Committee is another clear example of how sanctions seem, for some permanent members, to be an end in themselves rather than mechanisms to resolve political problems that arise.

Sanctions ought to be a political instrument that achieve a specific objective. They should not become a mechanism used for the collective punishment of a country. In the case of Eritrea, sanctions should have a clear road map towards a conclusion. By maintaining prolonged sanctions, as we are currently doing, there is no political purpose beyond serving the national interests of members of the Council or of regional situations that, as bilateral issues between countries, cannot be addressed as a multilateral issue to which we apply sanctions with a specific objective in mind.

We are concerned that in most cases, the Sanctions Committee uses the opinions and observations of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea at their whim. In some cases, when the Group says that something warrants sanctions, even without objective evidence, the Sanctions Committee immediately accepts the Group's opinion as valid, rather than one they need to consider more closely before taking action. We think it is the opposite. The Group submits a professional opinion — and I take this opportunity to acknowledge and express appreciation for the Monitoring Group — indicating that we ought to lift sanctions against Eritrea. However, neither the penholder nor some of the members of the Sanctions Committee wish to heed the recommendations coming from the Monitoring Group because they believe that they are insufficient. There seems to a be double standard with which we deal with the opinions of the Monitoring Group. Sometimes we accept its opinions when it suits the penholder countries to maintain sanctions against a country, yet whenever it presents an opinion contrary to the interest of those countries, as in the case of Eritrea, suddenly that opinion is insufficient.

In the final report of the Monitoring Group, it was very clear in the case of Eritrea that for the third consecutive year there was no evidence whatsoever that Eritrea was collaborating with or lending any support to Al-Shabaab. It was clearly stated that there was no evidence. The Committee has always received information related to groups in various countries of the region, but it does not take such information into account. That is the first, very important element of the Monitoring Group. I do not know what else we want to receive from the Monitoring Group, but it seems clear

that there is no cooperation between Al-Shabaab and Eritrea, which was the original cause of the sanctions.

Furthermore, in our final report we recognized the cooperation of the State of Qatar. Here we wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Qatar, Ambassador Al-Thani, for his efforts to mediate between Djibouti and Eritrea, both to resolve the issue of the border dispute, which is in a signed agreement between the countries, as well as to obtain the release of prisoners of war, which we welcome. That was a positive development in the Committee. The Ambassador of Qatar promised that Qatar would continue to mediate effectively and directly in an ongoing manner with those countries. In any normal situation, those elements would have been enough, not to lift the sanctions because it would need a road map but to at least establish a mechanism that would eventually lead to the lifting of the sanctions following an assessment.

We have been very concerned and have always expressed those concerns in debates about the Monitoring Group's methodology and transparency. What is the road map that ensures that a country can have a sanctions regime against it lifted? Here we only seek to come up with a mechanism. The delegation of China offered a very significant proposal that laid out a time frame during which we could work towards lifting sanctions against Eritrea. We believe that we should lift sanctions against Eritrea if we can draw up a road map. The proposal of China garnered the support of five countries, which is a sign important number. The penholder seems to believe that the proposal is not appropriate and that there is not sufficient reason to do so, and therefore the adoption of that balanced proposal did not take place.

Even though the draft was not adopted, it was at least the beginning of steps in the right direction. That is why we decided to abstain in the voting on resolution 2317 (2016). Until there is something new to give us reason to believe that we can extricate ourselves from the situation we cannot offer our support. We lament the situation and do not see how the issues at hand can be resolved within the framework of the mandate of the Sanctions Committee. We have always said that the Sanctions Committees have had to have an immediate political aim. They cannot always be used way of delivering collective punishment.

It does not seem to matter much in the decision on the resolution or in the Committee what Eritrea does regarding its positive steps forward or the report of the Monitoring Group. It does not make sense — the meetings, the initiatives and so on and so forth. Eventually, the decision comes down to one or a few permanent members. That is something we need to review.

With respect to the issue of Somalia and Eritrea, we support elements of resolution 2317 (2016) because we believe that Somalia continues to need all the support of the Sanctions Committee in order to take on its upcoming challenges. In the case of Eritrea, it seems to us that the Sanctions Committee and the Security Council must demonstrate sufficient flexibility and political capacity to understand that the situation in the Horn of Africa is changing rapidly and that there are huge dangers facing the entire region. The fundamental danger in that area is the threat of expansion of terrorism. That is not just a threat to the Horn of Africa. It is also a threat to the global North and the Middle East. We call on the Council to constructively set about resolving that type of issue and to ensure that the reports or the work of the Sanctions Committees do not become mere red tape. At the end of the day, only one or two permanent members will have their way. It signals defeat because it means that the penholder could not achieve consensus on the subject. We did not vote against the resolution because a regional situation exists that must resolved. In addition, there was only one minor mention — albeit important — about the issue of evaluating the lifting of sanctions.

I would also like to remember here Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay — a good friend and an Ambassador who represented his country's interests well — who regrettably died without seeing his country freed from an issue that caused him so much concern. Once again, I would like to extend our condolences to the delegation of Eritrea and make an appeal in the interest of all the countries of Africa so that the continent can have greater tangible support from the Security Council to resolve its problems. Seventy per cent of the sanctions committees are against African countries and, in the majority of cases, the former colonial Powers are heading those sanctions committees against Africa. We should think about that. We in Latin and South America will continue working in line with our capacities to achieve political solutions to all of the terrible conflicts that affect our brother countries.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): I would like to thank you, Sir, for giving my delegation this opportunity to address the Security Council. Allow me to also congratulate Senegal on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of November.

Eritrea believes that, once again, the Security Council has committed a grave injustice against the people of Eritrea by extending the unjustified sanctions. There is no reason to maintain sanctions against Eritrea, as the justification for them being imposed has long been proved non-existent, a fact that has been asserted by the Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group. In four of its reports, including during its present mandate, the Monitoring Group affirmed that there is no evidence of Eritrean support to Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

With regard to Djibouti, Eritrea remains committed to the mediation by the State of Qatar, which resulted in the release of all Djiboutian prisoners of war last March. The report (see S/2016/920) of the Monitoring Group makes it clear that all its interlocutors mention only seven prisoners of war in Eritrea, who are all accounted for. For its part, Eritrea has confirmed that there are no more Djiboutian prisoners on its hands. In the light of the reports of the Monitoring Group and serious developments in the region, it is incumbent upon the Security Council to lift the unfair, unjust and counterproductive sanctions on Eritrea without further delay.

Eritrea is keenly aware that, failing to find any substantive argument to continue the sanctions, some members of the Council have resorted to procedural matters, such as, in particular, the inability of the Monitoring Group to visit Eritrea. Truth be told, that is not the real reason for their determination to keep the sanctions in place. In fact, some of them have made it clear that even if the Group were to visit Eritrea, they would still not support the lifting of the sanctions.

The sanctions, which have been in place for the past seven years, have been detrimental not only to Eritrea but also to the Horn of Africa region. It has encouraged zero-sum approaches and imparted a sense of impunity to some countries and emboldened them to violate international law as well as to externalize their problems instead of cooperating with their neighbours to address the serious challenges of regional peace and security. Unfortunately, once again, the Security Council has missed an opportunity to contribute positively to regional peace, stability and amity, by maintaining the sanctions on Eritrea. For its part, Eritrea will continue making its positive contribution to regional peace, stability and security in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea regions.

In conclusion, Eritrea wishes to sincerely thank those delegations that advocated for the immediate lifting of the sanctions and those who have dissociated themselves from today's unfair and unwarranted resolution 2017 (2016).

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti wishes to express its profound gratitude to the members of the Council for this opportunity to offer Djibouti's perspective on the status of the mediation between Djibouti and Eritrea and to share some recent negative developments that constitute a violation of the Security Council's repeated demand that Eritrea cease arming, training and equipping armed grounds, including Al-Shabaab.

Djibouti feels compelled to make this contribution today because Eritrea has often offered a misleading and deceptive account of the progress made on the implementation of the 2010 mediation agreement signed by Djibouti and Qatar, in an unconvincing attempt to justify a call for the rescinding of the sanctions imposed on Eritrea by resolutions 1907 (2009), 2023 (2011), 2044 (2012) and 2317 (2016), just adopted today.

In various forums, Eritrea has often cynically characterized the border dispute with Djibouti as one of the pretexts under which the sanctions were justified and invoked the 10 June mediation agreement facilitated by His Highness the Emir of Qatar as a purported basis for rescinding sanctions. But it would be no exaggeration to state that the assertion that Eritrea is fully committed to Qatari mediation process is dishonest and not proved by the facts.

With respect to prisoners of war, the mediation agreement includes a single provision that each State promptly provide a list of names and identification numbers of all prisoners of war and other missing persons held in its custody. Djibouti did just that. Nearly six years have passed and Eritrea still refuses to provide the list or otherwise account for the remaining Djiboutians it has in its custody, incommunicado, and in the most inhuman and degrading conditions for the past eight years. Djibouti was hopeful that the release

of four prisoners of war earlier this year would signal a radical departure from past practices and induce a change in the behaviour of the State of Eritrea. Denial, obfuscation and procrastination belong to the past. The Secretary-General, and indeed the international community as a whole, welcomed that development as positive and expressed hope that tangible progress would be made — but that hope quickly vanished.

Instead of honouring its international obligations and commitments, Eritrea has continued to conduct activities aimed at destabilizing the region and inciting violent strife in Djibouti, as documented in the report (see S/2016/920) of the Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group, but has also provided weapons and ammunition to Al-Shabaab in Somalia. We have provided evidence of that to the Monitoring Group and the members of the Security Council and we stand ready to provide additional information. It is in violation of Security Council resolutions and runs counter to our collective efforts. That justifies the strengthening of sanctions, not rescinding them.

In its most recent open debate (see S/PV.7802), the Security Council carefully analysed the magnitude of the threats posed by asymmetrical attacks by terrorists and other armed groups targeting peacekeepers. Once again, Djibouti just recently lost soldiers to such attacks in Somalia. But, of course, we will continue to support our brothers and sisters in Somalia at this critical juncture of the political process.

We all face competing priorities as developing countries. One wonders why a developing country with so many challenges would divert precious funds destined for its development efforts to undertake activities that aim at undermining peace in the region.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the members of the Security Council for their continued vigilance and support for the legitimate goals pursued by Djibouti, in particular the settlement of the border dispute with Eritrea and the release of all 13 prisoners of war.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.